



U.S. Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**JOSE PEÑA ARRESTED FOR UNLAWFUL
POSSESSION OF COCAINE**

United States Attorney David M. Nissman announced today that a federal Complaint was filed, on St. Thomas, charging JOSE PEÑA, age 47, born in the Dominican Republic, with unlawful possession with intent to distribute cocaine, a Schedule II Controlled Substance, in violation of the Controlled Substances Act.

The Complaint alleges that, on or about June 16, 2004, the defendant possessed with intent to distribute in excess of five kilograms of cocaine, in violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841. The facts surrounding the Complaint reveal that PEÑA was driving a vehicle that contained almost 300 pounds (132 kilograms) of cocaine, when the Virgin Islands Police Department attempted to conduct a traffic stop of the vehicle. PEA and an unidentified passenger sped away from the Virgin Islands Police Department vehicle, and ended up crossing the median and driving against traffic on Brewers Beach Road. When the vehicle stopped, both PEÑA and the unidentified individual exited and fled on foot. PEÑA was ultimately caught in some nearby bushes. The cocaine inside of the vehicle driven by PEÑA was packaged in 119 individual brick-shaped quantities. Drug Enforcement Administration officials estimate that this

amount of cocaine could have a potential street value of \$3,000,000.

Possession with intent to distribute five (5) or more kilograms of cocaine carries a mandatory minimum term of imprisonment of ten years, and a maximum of life imprisonment, along with a four million dollar fine.

Attorney Nissman thanked Roberto G. Medina, Special Agent-in-Charge, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Jerome Harris, Special Agent-in-Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and the Virgin Islands Police Department (VIPD), for their hard work in successfully investigating this case.

Attorney Nissman emphasized that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until guilt is established at trial.